

Message Text

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47

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SY-04 SSO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 SS-20 NSC-07 NSCE-00 SP-03 L-03

PRS-01 A-01 SCA-01 USIE-00 USSS-00 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00

DRC-01 /081 W

----- 059413

O 171300Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3578

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 2702

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC IV GH

SUBJ: POSSIBLE KIDNAP THREAT

1. ON MORNING OF MAY 16 A MR. ROBERT OTENG, GHANAIAAN, VISITED PAO AND LATER EMBASSY OFFICERS TO REPORT THAT ON THE EVENING OF MAY 9 HE WAS TRAVELING FROM THE IVORY COAST TO GHANA AND SLEEPING AT A FILLING STATION NEAR THE IVORY COAST/GHANAIAAN BORDER PREPARATORY TO CROSSING THE BORDER ON THE MORNING OF MAY 10. HE WAS JOINED AT HIS SHELTER AREA BY THREE MEN TRAVELING ON FOOT, TWO OF WHOM WERE BLACK AND ONE DESCRIBED BY OTENG AS FAIRER SKINNED. HE FEIGNED SLEEP AND LISTENED TO THEIR CONVERSATION. ONE OF THE BLACKS HE FELT POSSIBLY COULD BE GHANAIAAN; THE OTHER HE COULD NOT IDENTIFY. THE FAIR-SKINNED MAN WAS STURDILY BUILT, WEARING A TEE-SHIRT, BROWNISH HAIR, AND WAS THE APPARENT LEADER. OTENG FELT THAT HE MIGHT POSSIBLY BE FROM MAURITANIA, I.E., NORTH AFRICAN. HE DID NOT THINK HE WAS "EUROPEAN WHITE MAN."

2. THE THREE CONVERSED IN BROKEN ENGLISH, THE FAIR-SKINNED MAN SPEAKING WITH HEAVY ACCENT ON HIS R'S. THE CONVERSATION WAS VERY SHORT AND CENTERED ON AN APPARENT PLOT TO KIDNAP "SOMEBODY CLOSE TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY," IN ABIDJAN AND ACCRA SIMULTANEOUS-
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LY, AND ON AN UNKNOWN DATE BUT PRIOR TO MAY 30. AT DAWN, THE THREE

"CONSPIRATORS" LEFT BORDER AREA AND PROCEEDED INTO INTERIOR OF IVORY COAST; OTENG CROSSED THE BORDER INTO GHANA AT "KOFI BADUKROM" FOR BEREKUM.

3. OTENG SEEMED SINCERE TO EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO INTERVIEWED HIM. HE ASKED FOR NO MONEY. HE MENTIONED HIS DELAY IN VISITING USIS/EMBASSY WAS BECAUSE HE HAD TO THINK THE MATTER OVER, IT BEING SO VERY SERIOUS. HE PLANS TO RETURN TO THE IVORY COAST AFTER A FEW WEEKS IN GHANA TO AGAIN TAKE UP WORK AT THE PORT OF SAN PEDRO.

4. THIS INCIDENT ALSO BEING REPORTED IN FULLER DETAIL THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS. EMBASSY PLANS TO ALERT LOCAL POLICE OFFICIALS AND, IN VIEW OF THIS POSSIBLE THREAT, WILL INFORM OFFICIAL PERSONNEL AND SELECTED LOCAL AMERICANS.
HANSON

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